



BERLINER BEITRÄGE ZUR SKANDINAVISTIK

Titel/
title: *Nietzsche's Ocean, Strindberg's Open Sea*

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Kapitel/
chapter: 5: »The Genealogy of Self«

In: Stern, Michael J.: *Nietzsche's Ocean, Strindberg's Open Sea*. Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut, 2008

ISBN: 3-932406-28-1
978-3-932406-28-7

Reihe/
series: Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik, Bd. 13

ISSN: 0933-4009

Seiten/
pages: 177–213

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Chapter 5: The Genealogy of Self

Contradiction, then, functions throughout discourse, as the principle of its historicity.¹

Michel Foucault writes that the »history of ideas recognizes [...] two levels of contradictions: that of appearances, which is resolved in the profound unity of discourse; and that of foundations, which give rise to discourse itself.« Foucault argues that despite attempts to reconcile these discrepancies, »contradiction is ceaselessly reborn through discourse«.² Up to now, engaging with contradictions of the first kind has served as a tool for situating the encounter between Nietzsche and Strindberg historically as a series of collisions within seemingly paradoxical positions.

These particular collisions arose due to a certain historical understanding; as the awareness of being a modern human being in the flow of time inflected the attempts of intellectuals to understand how they could either posit enduring forms or learn to affirm constant change in what they understood to be an increasingly contingent world. Strindberg's reception of Nietzsche was epitomized by contradictory claims and the discourse around the encounter between the two tended to smooth out the differences. As a result, the richness of the moment was relegated to the marginalia of literary history and the philosophical import of the encounter was written off as Strindberg's strong misreading of Nietzsche. More importantly than any claim of influence, the encounter revealed a certain post-positivist epistemological uncertainty where the drive to learn and to receive recognition from the other was expressed through tropes of appropriation and anticipation. Both Nietzsche and Strindberg inform us of a vivid conception of the relationship between descriptions of the world and of the self in late nineteenth century Europe.

Even though both men rejected teleological explanations of progressive historical change, the encounter was marked by a temporal displacement intrinsic to certain strains of modernity, namely the feeling that the past is irretrievable and the present is always pregnant with the future. This particular understanding of temporality had a profound effect

¹ FOUCAULT: 1972, 151

² Ibid.

on Nietzsche and Strindberg's conceptions of how narrative of the self could be told; for if the »I« is a historical construction and history has no telos, then how could one claim essential or enduring qualities without reverting to trans-historical spiritual or materialist claims? In the 1880's, both Nietzsche and Strindberg took recourse in a middle position, believing that modernity was a moment where the anticipation of change was confronted by the claim of the proper name; as naming and description themselves served as forms of appropriation in a contentious public culture. Their belief in the ability of discourse to temporarily place the stamp of being on becoming was often misread by their contemporaries, as often as not, in a rather ahistorical fashion.

The consequent rise of the trope of authenticity in the discourse around the Nietzsche reception in Scandinavia created a tension between the »good European« as a trans-national »aristocratic radical« who anticipates a future free from the parochial confines of the strong nation state and the ambiguous particularity of the national or racial type who re-constructs an authentic future out of a self-consciously fictional past. However, despite the essentializing propensity of the discourse around him, Nietzsche understood his own existence as being suffused with history:

Wohin man reisen muss. – Die unmittelbare Selbstbeobachtung reicht nicht lange aus, um sich kennen zu lernen: wir brauchen Geschichte, denn die Vergangenheit strömt in hundert Wellen in uns fort; wir selber sind ja Nichts als Das, was wir in jedem Augenblick von diesem Fortströmen empfinden.

(Whither we have to travel. – Direct self-observation is not nearly sufficient for us to know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us in a hundred waves; we ourselves are, indeed, nothing but that which at every moment we experience of this continued flowing.)³

For Nietzsche and Strindberg, the history of the self emanated from an engagement with internal contradictions. Therefore, Foucault's second type of contradiction, that from which discourse emerges, will be the subject of the remainder of this book. Both Nietzsche and Strindberg believed that the antinomies of the modern subject bring to bear a certain historical sense, specifically a sense of living in a nihilistic age, where »die obersten Werthe sich entwerthen« (the highest values are devalu-

3 NIETZSCHE: KSA 2, 1988b, 2:477, Aphorism 223. The English translation comes from: HOLLINGDALE: 1996, 2:267–268, Aphorism 223.

ated).⁴ Both men understood themselves to be living in a moment when they needed to »[d]em Werden den Charakter des Seins aufzuprägen« (*imprint* upon becoming the character of being)⁵ and they understood that »[w]enn kein Zeil in der ganzen Geschichte der menschlichen Geschicke liegt, so müssen wir eins hineinstecken« ([i]f there is no goal in the history of man's lot, then we must put one in).⁶

Nietzsche's genealogical method, which according to Eric Blondel utilizes »the language of the *life* of the body,«⁷ serves as a point of entry into our discussion of the contradictions that belie the claims for the autonomous individual. For certainly the collective demand for individual self-assertion leads to the construction of one of the most uncanny creatures in the history of modern thought, an individual who dares not deny his own autonomy for fear of departing from the values of the crowd. This is Nietzsche's herd animal, believing in his own individuality because of a universally held belief. However despite or perhaps because of his critique, Nietzsche realized the value of contradiction himself and understood it to be a defining aspect of his own modernity; his view of what it meant to be living in the late nineteenth Century clearly expresses the uncanniness of the position of the bourgeois subject. Congruently, one of his notebook entries from the mid 1880's reads:

Wenn ich einstmals das Wort »unzeitgemäß« auf meine Bücher geschrieben habe, wie viel Jugend, Unerfahrenheit, Winkel drückt sich in diesem Worte aus! Heute begreife ich, daß mit dieser Art Klage, Begeisterung und Unzufriedenheit ich eben damit zu den Modernsten der Modernen gehörte.

4 NIETZSCHE: 1970, 14. The English translation comes from STURGE: 2003, 146, entry 9 [35]. Michael Allen Gillespie claims that »[i]n contrast to all of his predecessors from Jacobi to Turgenev, Nietzsche thus sees Nihilism as the consequence of human weakness and not as a result of a Promethian striving for the superhuman. Indeed, for Nietzsche, the superhuman is not the cause of nihilism but its solution.« I will argue that the »Promethian« is an aspect of Nietzsche's nihilism as well. Certainly Zarathustra cites Goethe's »Prometheus Fragmente« and Robert Gooding Williams argues convincingly for Zarathustra's Promethian aspects. I would also add that the *will to power* is a species of Promethian expansion. See GILLESPIE: 1995, 179 and GOODING-WILLIAMS: 2001, 236–268

5 NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 320, entry 7 [54]. The English translation comes from STURGE: 2003, 138.

6 NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 242, entry 6 [9] The English translation comes from STURGE: 2003, 124.

7 From Eric Blondel's »Question of Genealogy,« collected in SCHACHT: 1994, 312.

(If I once wrote the word »untimely« on my books, how much youth, inexperience, peculiarity that word expressed! Today I realize it was precisely this kind of complaint, enthusiasm, and dissatisfaction that made me one of the most modern of the moderns.)⁸

Nietzsche understood his being modern by virtue of his opposition to modernity. This was his way of situating himself in history and for understanding the role that history played in his psychology. Nietzsche's contradictory discourse historicizes yet he claims that the collision between internalized positions cannot be directly observed; it emerges through discursive and performative acts. For »[w]ir sind uns unbekannt, wir Erkennenden, wir selbst uns selbst: das hat seinen guten Grund« ([we] are unknown to ourselves, we knowers: and with good reason).⁹ This particular species of »ignorance« evokes ironic thoughts about the *pathos of distance*. However it becomes apparent that the taking of distance in order to know cannot be the entire story for one who rejects the notion of an absolute objectivity, and thus the *pathos of distance* cannot be the basis for a Nietzschean epistemology all on its own. Perhaps, distance requires a reciprocal passion, a contradiction so to speak in the form of a *pathos of engagement*. Nietzsche implied that we require a context from which we can know and that we desire both finitude and something more, an awareness of the ebb and flow of time in consciousness.

Henry Staten contests the idea that the inconsistencies in the Nietzschean project are merely the hallmark of perspectival thinking. He writes that while Nietzsche advocates that all knowledge is perspectival, he does take positions, and seeing as much, the critic must assimilate Nietzsche from a »psychodialectical approach,« »the dialectic between logic and libido.«¹⁰ Staten also centers his critique in Nietzsche's bodies so to speak: in the textual corpus and in the libidinal economy that the text reveals. Staten's argument is compelling and his reasoning finds some support in Nietzsche famous dictum that all philosophy is really the unconscious memoir of the body.¹¹

Building on this line of reasoning and factoring in Michel's Foucault's postulation that contradictions allow the principle of historicity to

8 NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 162, Entry 2[201]. English translation: STURGE: 2003, 98.

9 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 247. The English translation comes from DIETHE: 2007, 3.

10 See STATEN: 1990. The first cited phrase is found on pg. 6, the second on pg. 2.

11 Ibid., 8–9. Here Staten cites Nietzsche from JBG (BGE), Aphorism 6.

emerge in thought, one wonders how to reconstruct the contradictions in Nietzsche's genealogies so that they reflect his timeliness, his modernity, and his moment. It is helpful to recall that Nietzsche believed himself to be living in »die Zeit der Tragödie, die Zeit der Moralen und Religionen« (the age of tragedy, in the age of moralities and religions).¹² However despite the dominance of these aspects of the age, we must not read this formulation in a static manner for Nietzsche's contradictory method is born from his concern for difference and relation. Gilles Deleuze reminds us that the »tragic is only to be found in multiplicity,«¹³ and from Aristotle on we have known that collision creates the dramatic modality of a tragic art. Nietzsche's genealogical method necessarily involves descriptions of colliding and contradictory moments in both the history of morality and I would argue in the history of the self. For as Nietzsche argues in the very aphorism that Staten uses to introduce his study of the philosopher's »psychodialectical« economy:

Bei allem Wollen handelt es sich schlechterdings um Befehlen und Gehorchen, auf der Grundlage, wie gesagt, eines Gesellschaftsbaus vieler »Seelen«: weshalb ein Philosoph sich das Recht nehmen sollte, Wollen an sich schon unter den Gesichtskreis der Moral zu fassen: Moral nämlich als Lehre von den Herrschafts-Verhältnissen verstanden, unter denen das Phänomen »Leben« entsteht.

(All willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying, on the groundwork, as I have said, of a society constructed of many »souls«; from which a philosopher should claim the right to understand willing itself within the framework of morality: morality understood as a doctrine of power relations under which the phenomenon of »life« arises.)¹⁴

For Nietzsche the sense that one has of history is related to »die Fähigkeit, die Rangordnung von Werthschätzungen schnell zu errathen, ach welchen ein Volk, eine Gesellschaft, ein Mensch lebt« (the capacity to divine quickly the valuations by which a society, a man lives).¹⁵ Staten is certainly right to take to task anyone who would simply argue that

¹² NIETZSCHE: 1988c, KSA 3, 370, Aphorism 1. The English comes from NAUCKHOFF: 2001, 28, Aphorism 1.

¹³ DELEUZE: 1983, 17; my translation.

¹⁴ NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 32, Aphorism 19. The English comes from NORMAN: 2002, 20.

¹⁵ See NIETZSCHE: 1974a, 232. The English translation comes from STURGE: 2003, 17, Entry 35 [2]. See also NIETZSCHE: 1993, 157–160, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Aphorism 224.

Nietzsche's contradictions are merely a result of perspectivalism; for this is not only a question of specific viewpoints, but of drives, the perspectives they create, and the organization of these competing perspectives within the organism. Nietzsche argues that »[v]on jedem unserer Grundtriebe aus giebt es verschiedene perspektivische Abschätzung alles Geschehens und Erlebens« ([f]rom each of our fundamental drives there is a different appraisal of everything that happens and is experienced). He continues by adding there is »einer Vielheit von ›Willen zur Macht‹: jeder mit Vielheit von Ausdrucksmitteln und Formen« (a multiplicity of ›wills to power‹: each one with a means of expression and forms).¹⁶ He even posits that »der Mensch eine Vielheit von Kräften ist, welche in einer Rangordnung stehen« (man is a multiplicity of forces, which stand in an order of rank) so as to provide an internal hierarchy of command that enhances their existence.¹⁷ It becomes apparent that there is a strong processional commonality between the way one understands historically and the way one's drives are organized to produce a moral sense as well. Seen in this light, it is easier to understand why Nietzsche critiques the notion of a unitary subject when he critiques morality, and why he wonders if perhaps history is yet to be discovered.¹⁸

The implications in all this come to the fore when we realize that Nietzsche relegates the »I,« the »soul,« the »unitary« and the »free« wills to fictions, to composites abbreviating multiplicities.¹⁹ Self-depiction is both retrospective (adding the doer to the deed) and anticipatory (based on the noble privilege of keeping promises) in this framework, and this helps to explain the imperative of a notion of time that demands a circle of recurrence. The self derives itself through performance, through aesthetic reconstruction, and this is dependent on contradictions. In the end, I argue with Foucault that these contradictions situate Nietzsche historically in the moment where bourgeois subjects attack bourgeois

¹⁶ NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 21. The English translation comes from: STURGE: 2003, 59–60, Entry 1 [58].

¹⁷ NIETZSCHE: 1974a, 181, Entry 34 [123]; STURGE: 2003, 8, for the translation.

¹⁸ See Aphorism 34, »Historia Abscondita«. NIETZSCHE: 1988c, KSA 3, 404, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. The English may be found in NAUCKHOFF and DEL CARO: 2001, 53–54.

¹⁹ For a compelling study of this phenomenon, see PARKES: 1994.

suppositions. I argue that the subject emerges in the late nineteenth century as the »contradiction ceaselessly reborn through discourse«.²⁰

The last chapter addressed how scholars had reconciled both the contradictory aspects of Strindberg's literary production and the inconsistencies in his private statements concerning his encounter with Nietzsche. It was my contention that the scholarship on the subject has been restricted by the parameters of a model of analysis based on influence, and has heretofore reconciled these contradictions in order to posit the impossibility of influence. I argued further that a commonality between Nietzsche and Strindberg can be found in these selfsame contradictions if they are understood as part of a dynamic process of subject formation rather than merely a set of incongruent statements. As Steven E. Aschheim has pointed out, the determination of the degree of an author's Nietzscheanism is not contingent upon his conceptual congruity to a Nietzschean master text.

Strindberg believed that Nietzsche's penchant for contradiction made him the timeliest, »the most modern of us all,« and as mentioned earlier, he understood his palinodic philosophical production as a systemless system, as a process in other words. For Strindberg, the question was not »to be or not to be« Nietzschean, but to be both Nietzschean and not Nietzschean at the same time. He believed that Nietzsche had articulated his own way of understanding the past, as a re-collection in the moment, as an experimental re-enactment whose end result was a fictional sense of self. As we shall see, this sense of self was dependent on an agonistic process that included an internalization of the »truth« of contradictions.²¹ What Strindberg saw as Nietzsche's *systemless system*, what he saw as the habit of opposing everything, I call the *genealogy of self*.

It is from the premise of colliding genealogical possibilities that I take my leave of the previous scholarship on the subject and start an interrogation of this concept. As previously defined, the *genealogy of self* is a

20 In the end, I will argue we live in similar times where a revival of fundamentalist religious views worldwide stands mostly in staunch opposition to the values of globalizing capital.

21 Wolfgang Müller-Lauter went so far as to state that »For Nietzsche, the whole of reality is determined from the outset by the ›struggle‹ of opposites.« While I would not go so far as to call the contradictory terms used by Nietzsche »opposites« (for I believe he posits binaries only to empty the term *opposite* of its meaning), I agree that the motor of his philosophy sets opposing terms into colliding orbits. For the source of the citation above see MÜLLER-LAUTER: 1999, 5.

hermeneutic process that highlights the internalization of contradictory elements. It is a process of subject formation that bares its own device and forwards a weakened truth claim. As the *genealogy of self* is a dynamic process that highlights the »overcoming« of the past by the imperatives of the moment, contradiction ceases to be a problematic aspect and functions as the raw material for self-creation. Contradiction, then, marks the location where the device is bared. It conflates differentiated elements that are set in opposition to each other, and the force of this encounter is the vital element of the *genealogy of self*. In the *genealogy of self*, the construction of the »I« is always the result of a collision between collective modes of valuation and a mode of self-description that highlights the establishment of an internal hierarchy created through struggle. The result of this struggle is the description of a subject that is in no way a stable »I,« but is rather an »I« in a constant state of becoming, an »I« aware of its own history and in anticipation of its own futurity. In other words, a contingent subjectivity is constructed and deconstructed. In this way we are alerted to the phenomenon of the bourgeois uncanny, the means by which the notion of the individual is collectively determined and given the veneer of an absolutely discrete unit of measure.

In the encounter between Strindberg and Nietzsche, it is this very process that makes any attempt at a determination of influence an exercise in futility. For the value of the encounter resides in its very historicity, as a moment of rebellion against a notion of subjectivity upon which it was dependent, the false assumption of the self-creating and assertive individual. It is ironic that these two writers, who have often been depicted as exemplars of individual self-generation and whose reputation has been largely crafted from the material harvested from their more polemical moments, both forwarded notions of individuation that highlighted the fictionality of the process and factored in historical conditions. In this sense, both Nietzsche and Strindberg performed a process of subject-creation that highlighted the tension between necessity and contingency. The *genealogy of self* is a site of collision between heredity and creativity and between history and the moment of self-identification, which stamps being on the soft flesh of becoming in the flow of time.

It is important to note that my investigation of this concept is not merely a capitulation to the discourse of the environment of the reception

with its emphasis on the individual who either created history or was not subject to its conditions. While my interrogation will precipitate a renewed investigation of the concepts whose surfaces were traced in our previous investigation of the discursive environment of the reception, it will concentrate on the concept that remained underdeveloped in this discourse, namely, the concept of origin. For the salient aspect of the *genealogy of self*, the very motor that drives the process, are two oppositions, the tension between naming and forgetting and the agonism between dual origins. These oppositions are evident in several moments of the two men's authorship, and an investigation of these instances will show that neither Strindberg nor Nietzsche discounted historical conditions nor did they forward a notion of authenticity based on an intrinsic element of origination. They shared a notion of self-construction that conflated historical and experiential elements in a momentary metaphorical complex. In other words, in this investigation I will be concerned with the internalization of contradictions in a dynamic process.

An objection can be raised: What is the difference between what I have previously called the metaphysics of poeticizing the self into text and the textual construction of subjectivity that I call the *genealogy of self*? The difference resides in the following: the *genealogy of self* bares the device of the poeticization of self into text and it makes a weakened truth claim. It does not conflate man and text; it claims only the status of an interpretation. It posits the predicates of the proper name of the self as the assumption of a momentary perspective that is subject to continual repetition. The end result of a *genealogy of self* is not a claim for a stable subjectivity. The self is not a result of an autobiographical excavation of the content of experience; it is not a confirmation of the past. The *genealogy of self* highlights a formal process, a self-referential hermeneutic, which is a struggle between necessity and contingency resulting in a momentary conflation of history and autobiography in a compound metaphor. With this in mind, I will now turn to an exploration of the Nietzschean genealogical method.

Pathos of Distance, Pathos of Engagement: The Relationship of Genealogy and Polemic

In chapter four, I remarked that the surface aspect of the commonality in Strindberg and Nietzsche's authorial projects could be found in a means

of valuation whose dynamic was an oscillation between proximity and distance. I explained this phenomenon through a brief explication of the Nietzschean opposition between *das Pathos der Distanz* (the pathos of distance) and appropriation through naming.²² In this section, I will elaborate on this method of valuation by analyzing those Nietzschean texts that are most concerned with this subject: a theoretical investigation of what he saw as the dominant mode of valuation in the West, *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*), and his self-description, *Ecce Homo*. These two genealogies are inextricably linked as Nietzsche understood this dominant perspective, the *ascetic ideal*, to be an internalization of suffering and considered the praxis of his philosophy to be a *Selbstüberwindung* (self-overcoming). His genealogical work re-enacted what he considered to be the struggle between this perspective and a *noble* perspective on both the level of »history« and »autobiography«. Considering this postulation, the problem of the *relativity* of Nietzsche's perspectivalism must be addressed. For if the Nietzschean genealogy confronted what he saw as the dominant perspective in Western culture with just another perspective, what is his truth claim?

Section 22 of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*) informs the following reading of Nietzsche's twin genealogies. Though this text cannot be considered as an example of Nietzsche's genealogical corpus, it provides us with a means of understanding the genealogies in light of their perspectivalism. In this section, Nietzsche takes the »Physicists« and »bad Philologists« to task for positing the »Gesetzmässigkeit der Natur« (nature's conformity to law).²³ He accuses them of mistaking their interpretation for fact and goes on to forward a counter claim that nature is not subject to law, but instead expresses *der Wille zur Macht* in all of its manifestations. The section ends by admitting:

Gesetzt, dass auch dies nur Interpretation ist – und ihr werdet eifrig genug sein, dies einzuwenden? – nun, umso besser. –

(Granted this too is only an interpretation – and you will be eager enough to raise an objection? – well, so much the better. –)²⁴

²² The claim that naming appropriates is at least as old as the book of Genesis.

²³ NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 37. See also HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 52 for the translation of the phrase.

²⁴ Ibid. NIETZSCHE for the original and HOLLINGDALE for the translation.

Readers of Nietzsche's genealogical works are confronted with a basic interpretive problem. Do we read these genealogies as historical accounts, as polemics, or in a more Nietzschean sense, as a masked »autobiography« that calls itself a linguistic manifestation of *der Wille zur Macht* (the will to power). Nietzsche's claim that perspective delimits interpretation can be easily turned against him by an unsympathetic reader who asserts that perspectivism undermines his critical project by rendering his own assertions relative to any other assertion. Nietzsche can be accused of either denying the very foundation upon which his postulations stand or of using the *will to power* as a metaphysical ground. However, an interpretation of this kind would arrest the motion, which characterizes the Nietzschean genealogical method. It is not that Nietzsche lacked a truth claim, but rather that he refrained from connecting his truth claim to any static model. He stated time and time again that our understanding of »reality« is an interpretation in competition with and in relation to other interpretations. The Nietzschean genealogy admits to its perspective, but this does not negate the relevance of his claim for an affirmative praxis.

Nietzschean perspectivism does not merely admit to the existence of divergent points of view. It is not a passive gesture that simply acknowledges a multiplicity of interpretations. His perspectivism is not relative; it is relational. It is not relative in the sense that interpretations exist independently of and equal to one another. It is relational in that interpretations are an event of *the will to power*. »Der Wille zur Macht interpretiert« (The will to power interprets), and as an interpretive force, defines itself in relation to other interpretations.²⁵ For Nietzsche, interpretation was an event of *the will to power* and as such experiences »Alles Geschehen, alle Bewegung, alles Werden als ein Feststellen von Grad- und Kraftverhältnissen, als ein *Kampf*« (All that happens, all movement, all becoming, as a determination of relations of degree and force, as a struggle).²⁶

Nietzschean interpretation collides with other interpretations in the world and is never a neutral activity. An interpretative perspective and the resulting exegesis cannot constitute a neutral ground. Within this

25 NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 137, Entry 2[148]. The English translation is from STURGE: 2003, 91.

26 NIETZSCHE: 1970, 49, Entry 9[91]. STURGE: 2003, 155, for the translation.

framework, our understanding of the world is textual, and the confluence of its multiple interpretations results in it being a site of collision.²⁷ This collision activates a play of forces. However, not all interpretations are equal. »[S]chlechte Philologie« mistakes its interpretation for the text itself. Nietzsche's »bad philologists« mistake their calculations for the world as such, and understand existence as governed by laws.²⁸ It is to them that Nietzsche directs his challenge. This is the heart of Nietzsche's perspectivism. Interpretation is always met by counter-interpretations, memory by counter-memory, and dogma by difference.²⁹ An interpretation seeks to »master« other interpretations. Nietzsche's own interpretation depended upon his objections to previous interpretations and the objections of others to his, and so on.³⁰ That is not to say that this relationship is parasitic.³¹ A Nietzschean interpretation does not feed off previous interpretations, it engages with them in an oscillation between distance and proximity in a movement between *das Pathos der Distanz* (*the pathos of distance*) and polemic as a pathos of engagement. »In Wahrheit ist Interpretation ein Mittel selbst, um Herr über etwas zu werden.« (In truth, interpretation is itself a means of becoming master of something.)³²

This mastering is not parasitic; it is parodic. It does not draw its lifeblood from the vitality of previously stated positions. It inhabits the same discursive space, so to speak; confronting a poem with another poem, colonizing or if you prefer, de-colonizing the sacred space of the western tradition with a counter narrative of origination. The drive to master occurs in three moments. *The will to power* is engaged within the »self,« with the »historical« past and with other interpretations in the world.

27 This is an example of what I call »Nietzschean Modesty,« a modesty that ironically is dependent upon a polemical rhetorical assertion.

28 NIETZSCHE: 1993, 37 (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*).

29 See FOUCAULT: 1980.

30 As Daniel Conway puts it: »Hence a NIETZSCHEAN genealogy is successful not if it achieves or approximates objective validity, but if it effectively supplants or discredits the dominant interpretation of the historical phenomenon in question.« See Conway's »Genealogy and Critical Method« in SCHACHT: 1994, 324.

31 Conway feels that it is. I agree with him that Nietzsche's discourse attempts to occupy the same discursive space as other interpretations, but see the modality as being sometimes parodic, sometimes ironic, always appropriating, and not parasitic. See *ibid.*, 318.

32 NIETZSCHE: 1974b, 138, Entry 2[148]. The English is from: STURGE: 2003, 90.

The first two moments of engagement address »autobiographical« and »historical« concerns in order to affirm chance and becoming. This necessitates a genealogy. The third moment manifests itself in an eternal present tense and speaks in a polemical voice. These three moments are dependent on each other and do not constitute a system of discrete elements. They are aspects of a dynamic complex of forces, which engage in an interpretive event. They cannot be reduced to historical and autobiographical elements or subject and object relations. For Nietzsche, the salient characteristic of his contemporary historical environment was the internalization of repressive elements of the *ascetic ideal*. He saw himself as a site where the contradictory elements of instinct and internalized history were in a state of constant struggle. These contradictory elements, in turn, act as the raw material for self-creation.

The remainder of this chapter will explore this play of forces by investigating the relationship between the genealogical elements of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*) and *Ecce Homo* and the polemical voice employed in both of these texts. The genealogical and polemical moments in these texts will be addressed discretely, in relation to each other, and as constituent formal elements of the three interpretative sights mentioned above. My preliminary thesis reads: *Nietzsche's fascination with moral valuation in his later work was accompanied by a concern with the problem of the relationship between his historical environment and subject formation. His genealogies are not an attempt to reconstruct the »origin« of moral valuation, but a performative act, a negotiation between the interpretative poles of necessity and contingency in the act of self-construction.*³³

Genealogy

Meine Humanität ist eine beständige Selbstüberwindung.

³³ Keith Ansell Pearson writes: »Nietzsche construes the advent of nihilism as providing the occasion for a supreme act of self-examination on the part of humanity, namely a revaluation of all values, including a revaluation of the value of civilization.« I would add that this includes a self vivisection from which internalized historical elements are unknotted and re-organized. The source of the citation above is ANSELL-PEARSON: 1991, 44.

(My Humanity is a constant self-overcoming).³⁴

For Nietzsche, interpretation is the product of an internal determination, for »unser Leib ist ja nur ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler Seelen« (our body is, after all, only a society constructed out of many souls).³⁵ Yet this internal determination is not an innate principle, it is the product of a long history of social interaction and reaction, a social structure of internalized relationships of active and reactive forces.³⁶ However, the individual is not determined solely by this »history«. The possibility exists for him to interact with history through the interpretative and symbolic aspects of consciousness.³⁷

If Nietzsche's representation of consciousness is metaphorical, as claimed by Sarah Kofman, it is because the »unsymbolisch« meaning which *ancient* man ascribed to attributes has been laden with symbolic meaning over time.³⁸ In any case, the internalization of energy, which Nietzsche believed to form consciousness, is by no means mimetic. It is not a mirror image of the external world displayed upon the surface of an individual *tabula rasa*, but rather the inward turning and inflection of an interpretative perspective that created a hierarchy by positing values.

Nietzsche explained how this internalized social structure (*Gesellschaftsbau*) was created and how it was internalized, through his de-

34 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, Section 8, 274, »Warum ich so weise bin«. The English can be found in NORMAN: 2005, 83.

35 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 33. The English translation is taken NORMAN: 2002, 19.

36 For one description of these active and reactive forces see DELEUZE: 1983, 39–72. For a critique of Deleuze's argument see STATEN: 1990, 16–18.

37 Mark Warren writes: »There is a necessary tension between the universalizing aspects of language, with its hold over consciousness, and the individualizing qualities of experience and biography. Unless we see that this is a problem, Nietzsche is arguing, we fail to understand the experiential bases of meaning and agency.« See WARREN: 1988, 57.

38 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 264–265: »Im Übrigen sei man davor gewarnt, diese Begriffe ›rein‹ und ›unrein‹ nicht von vornherein zu schwer, zu weit oder gar symbolisch zu nehmen: alle Begriffe der älteren Menschheit sind vielmehr anfänglich in einem uns kaum ausdenkbaren Maasse grob, plump, äusserlich, eng, geradezu und insbesondere *unsymbolisch* verstanden worden.« The English translation comes from KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 31–32. It reads, »One should be warned, moreover, against taking these concepts ›pure‹ and ›impure‹ too ponderously or broadly, not to say symbolically: all the concepts of ancient man were rather at first incredibly uncouth, coarse, external, narrow, straightforward, and altogether *unsymbolic* in meaning to a degree that we can scarcely conceive.«

scription of the origin of consciousness and conscience in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*). According to this text, conscience originates in the »dominirende Instinkt« (dominating instinct) of the »souveraine Mensch« (sovereign human) who becomes aware of the »Privilegium der Verantwortlichkeit« (Privilege of Responsibility) and consciousness came as the result of the suffering of those who were dominated.³⁹ For Nietzsche, a healthy conscience is distinguished by its ability to distinguish between what to remember and what to forget. This noble »Privilegium der Verantwortlichkeit« was the result of an act of self-affirmation, an active valorization of the ability to extend the will into the future. This ability to select and affirm is the hallmark of *noble* perspective. According to Nietzsche, the bodies that saw from this perspective conquered, organized, and codified the proto-societies of pre-history.

»Schlechtes Gewissen« (Bad Conscience), on the other hand, is created when »Die Feindschaft, die Grausamkeit, die Lust an der Verfolgung, am Überfall, am Wechsel, an der Zerstörung – Alles das gegen die Inhaber solcher Instinkte sich wendend« (Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction – all this turned against the possessors of such instincts).⁴⁰ The creation of this proto-state with its system of hierarchy, law, and domination, abetted the development of a »herd animal« who internalized his dammed up aggression and thereby created a reactive inner life. Suffering, denied an outlet and turned inward, became meaningless, for it lacked a witness. A God or Gods were created to serve as witnesses, and gave meaning as he/they assumed the role(s) of creator(s). The *priest* seized upon this unhealthy condition and created a perspective epitomized by *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* is defined as being the inability to digest experience. From this inability to forget, the spirit of revenge is born. The internal space of consciousness developed out of this reactive condition: »Die ganze innere Welt, ursprünglich dünn wie zwischen zwei Häute eingespannt, ist in dem Maasse [sic] aus einander- und aufgegangen, hat Tiefe, Breite, Höhe bekommen, als die Entladung des Menschen nach Aussen *gehemmt* worden ist.« (The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth,

39 NIETZSCHE: 1993, 294.

40 Ibid., 323. The English translation is from KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 85.

breath, and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man's instincts were *obstructed*.)⁴¹ *Ressentiment*, as Nietzsche remarked, is an illness that is pregnant with possibility. As Robert Guay points out, »the bad conscience was what created the self-distance needed to take oneself as an object.«⁴² Nietzsche also reminds us: »Das tiefe Leiden machte vornehm; es trennt.« (Profound suffering makes you noble: it separates.)⁴³ Repression opens up the possibility of both the sovereign individual and the human as a herd animal. Nietzsche understood this to be his own context and his own struggle.

Though there is more to Nietzsche's narrative and the description above is schematic, my intention is merely to point out that the *noble* ability to forget and to use memory selectively to extend the will is one internalized perspective, and the *herd animal's* inability to digest experience is another. In other words, the *noble* creates and values, while the enslaved *herd animal* believes that he is created and values an absolute. The agonistic relationship between these two perspectives is part and parcel of the multiplicity within the »individual«.

As a result of this internalization of the relationship between these two perspectives, a struggle ensues within the body as well as without. Self-overcoming within a body, which interacts as a social structure (*Gesellschaftsbau*), suggests the imposition of an internal hierarchy. The principle that imposes this hierarchy is what Nietzsche calls the »*organisierende Idee*«.⁴⁴ He states that this self-organization is not based on the selfless principle of living for others or an abstract goal, nor is it based on the self-knowledge of a stable subject. It is the fruit which ripens by avoiding »grosse [...] Imperative« (all great imperatives), »sie bildet der Reihe nach alle dienenden Vermögen aus, bevor sie irgend Etwas von der dominirenden [sic] Aufgabe, von ›Ziel‹, ›Zweck‹, ›Sinn‹ verlauten lässt« (it develops all the *servile* faculties before giving any clue of the dominating task, the ›goal‹, the ›purpose‹ or the ›meaning‹).⁴⁵

41 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 322. The English is from DIETHE 2007, 57.

42 GUAYN: 2006, 358.

43 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 225, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Aphorism 270. The English translation comes from NORMAN: 2002, 166.

44 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, 294, *Ecce Homo*, Section 9, »Warum ich so klug bin«. The English translation comes from NORMAN: 2005, 97.

45 Ibid. For the original and the translation.

»Der Wille, einen Affekt zu überwinden, ist zuletzt doch nur der Wille eines anderen oder mehrerer anderer Affekte.« (The will to overcome an emotion is ultimately only the will of another emotion or of several others.)⁴⁶ Self-overcoming is the result of an internal play of forces in which discrete aspects of the internalized *social structure* master other subservient aspects. Therefore, self-overcoming is not a reconciliation of equals, but a domination of certain drives over others. The self then is a site of competing perspectives and interpretations. Self-overcoming is not the discovery of a *true* self, or the positing of the ego as text, – it is the affirmation of a dominant perspective. A *genealogy of self* is the selective use of memory in order to affirm this dominance. A *genealogy of self* is an affirmative praxis, an event of self-interpretation in which a *noble* perspective, a *healthy* perspective, subdues competing interpretations. »Unserm stärksten Triebe, dem Tyrannen in uns, unterwirft sich nicht nur unsere Vernunft, sondern auch unser Gewissen.« (To our strongest drive, the tyrant in us, not only our reason but also our conscience submits.)⁴⁷

So in der That erscheint mir *jetzt* jene lange Krankheits-Zeit: ich entdeckte das Leben gleichsam neu, mich selber eingerechnet, ich schmeckte alle guten und selbst kleinen Dinge, wie sie Andre nicht leicht schmecken könnten, – ich machte aus meinem Willen zur Gesundheit, zum *Leben*, meine Philosophie ...

(This is, in fact, how that long period of illness looks to me *now*: I discovered life anew, as it were, myself included, I tasted good and even small things in ways other people cannot easily do, – I created my philosophy from out of my will to health, to *life*.)⁴⁸

Ecce Homo, Nietzsche's *genealogy of self* is not an autobiography, it is a philosophy, a praxis. It is the dramatization of a way of life.⁴⁹ The *genealogy of self* is a site where the genetic aspects of a created perspective are untangled, where the interaction of forces is displayed, where a hier-

46 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 93, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Aphorism 117. The English translation comes from HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 98.

47 NIETZSCHE: 1993, 100, Aphorism 158. For the translation HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 103.

48 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, Section 2, 266–267, *Ecce Homo* »Warum ich so weise bin«. The English translation is from NORMAN: 2005, 76.

49 Please note the difference between my claim that this is a dramatization of a way of life and Alexander NEHAMAS' claims in his wonderful *Nietzsche. Life as Literature* (1985). Nehamas argues that Nietzsche makes a literary character out of himself; my point is that Nietzsche performs and dramatizes those pre-discursive contradictions discussed in the introduction to this chapter.

archy is established, and where health is affirmed. The *genealogy of self* displays a locus of selection and reveals the antinomy of self.

»Abgerechnet nämlich, dass ich ein *décadent* bin, bin ich auch dessen Gegensatz.« (Granting that I am a decadent, I am the opposite as well.)⁵⁰ This celebrated sentence reveals the antinomy discussed above. Nietzsche goes on to describe how he used his decadence, his sickness, as an »energisches Stimulans zum Leben« (energetic stimulus to life).⁵¹ The next step in our analysis is to show how the *genealogy of self* is a praxis, a performance of subject construction in a narrative with a weakened truth claim. In his ensuing description of the healthy individual, Nietzsche stated: »Er sammelt instinktiv aus Allem, was er sieht, hört, erlebt, *seine* Summe: er ist ein auswählendes Princip, er lässt Viel durchfallen.« (He instinctively gathers *his* totality from everything he sees, hears, experiences: he is a principle of selection, he lets many things fall by the wayside.)⁵² Like the *noble* in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, the healthy individual knows how willfully to forget. This principle of selection implies that the healthy individual is a locus of interpretation, a creator of a perspective through a process of »instinctive preference«. However, if *the genealogy of self* is a performative praxis, as I have claimed, how is this process affirmed? How does one overcome himself? Nietzsche clues us in: »Wohlan, ich bin das *Gegenstück* eines *décadent*: denn ich beschrieb eben *mich*.« (Well then, I am the *opposite* of a *decadent*: because I have just described *myself*.)⁵³

For Nietzsche, self-description was not a recapitulation of the qualities of a static ego. It was an affirmation, the performance of an act of self-overcoming. In the *genealogy of self*, writing is the affirmative act of self-creation, the expressive act of self-definition through which the dominant interpretative perspective is valorized. If autobiography is a description of the »doer,« a *genealogy of self* is the creation of the »deed«. It revolves around the selective use of memory in order to affirm active forces. This is not a banal falsification of the past, but rather a manifestation of the ritual aspects of the *Wiederkunft des Gleichen*

50 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, 266. The English translation is from NORMAN: 2005, 76.

51 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, 266. For the original, English translation: NORMAN: 2005, 77.

52 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, 267. English Translation: NORMAN: 2005, 77.

53 Ibid. For both the original and the translation.

(Eternal Return of the Same). This ritual aspect is a performative re-enactment of the creation of a dominant perspective through naming. This leads us to a question: How does language affirm a noble perspective?

Das Herrenrecht, Namen zu geben, geht so weit, dass man sich erlauben sollte, den Ursprung der Sprache selbst als Machtäusserung der Herrschenden zu fassen: sie sagen »das ist das und das,« sie siegeln jegliches Ding und Geschehen mit einem Laute ab und nehmen es dadurch gleichsam in Besitz.

(The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say »this is this and this,« they seal everything and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.)⁵⁴

In Chapter four, this citation was utilized to illustrate Nietzsche's conception that the act of naming is an interpretative process that appropriates by making a thing or an event proximate. Our illustration in that instance was an example of how valuation occurred in a moment of engagement with Strindberg's play, *Fadren (The Father)*. The act of naming manifests itself in his genealogical work as a means of making the past proximate through appropriation. The issue here is a suspension of temporality. Our task is to explicate how this process treats elements of the past, regardless of whether these elements are historical or experiential. The key to understanding this process is Nietzsche's conception of the relationship between naming and origination.

In the citation above, Nietzsche stated that language was »originally« a form of possession, that naming seals and prolongs the domination of things and events in the world. However, the concept of origins is problematic in Nietzsche's genealogies for he declared:

die Ursache der Entstehung eines Dings und dessen schliessliche Nützlichkeit, dessen thatsächliche Verwendung und Einordnung in ein System von Zwecken toto coelo auseinander liegen; dass etwas Vorhandenes, irgendwie Zustande-Gekommenes immer wieder von einer ihm überlegenen Macht auf neue Ansichten ausgelegt, neu in Beschlag genommen, zu einem neuen Nutzen umgebildet und umgerichtet wird; dass alles Geschehen in der organischen Welt ein Überwältigen, Herrwerden ein Neu-Interpretieren, ein Zurechtmachen ist, bei dem der bisherige »Sinn« und »Zweck« nothwendig verdunkelt oder ganz ausgelöscht werden muss.

54 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 260. The English translation is from KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 26.

(the cause and the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming *master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous »meaning« and »purpose« are necessarily obscured or even obliterated.)⁵⁵

There is a distance between origin and use, and this difference is explained by an act of mastery through interpretation. Seeing this, it would be a mistake to explain Nietzsche's understanding of the origin of language solely from his statement on the *lordly right to name*. His understanding of the possibility of discerning origins explains the parentheses around his postulation about the origination of language. One could claim that whenever Nietzsche posits an origin, the parenthetical nature of his postulation is understood. For in a Nietzschean genealogy, origins are posited to discern a notion of the active creation of something that has been transformed through time. This clears the ground for a genealogy that will compete with other interpretations.

Therefore, this parenthetical statement about the origin of language should not be taken as a description of a static relationship between a noble perspective and the ability to name. In *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*), Nietzsche traced just how far linguistic purpose has come from its origin, and he exposes this movement as a redefinition of the terms of valuation in the service of the ascetic ideal. His positing of origins can be understood as the deconstruction of an alloy where noble components are parenthetically separated from the base metals. The component metals of the alloy remain, but a new hierarchy is established and the alloy is given a new name. As Sarah Kofman writes: »Genealogical etymology does not aim to find the originary, true, and accurate meaning, but to discover multiple origins and to hierarchize them.«⁵⁶ This act of ranking has a purpose as well, for »vergessen wir auch diess nicht: es genügt, neue Namen und Schätzungen und Wahrscheinlichkeiten zu schaffen, um auf die Länge hin neue ›Dinge‹ zu schaffen« (let us not also forget that in the long run it is enough to create

55 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 313–314, for the original, KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 77, for the translation.

56 KOFMAN: 1993, 87.

new names and valuations and appearances of truth in order to create new »things«).⁵⁷

Nietzschean genealogy, as a performative act, reclaims the right to name for its interpretive perspective. The »origin« of language is parenthetically posited in order to show that, for the noble, language is the active mastering of something in the present. In other words, naming is the taking possession, the domination of a thing by the use of language. Nietzsche constructs an etymology for the words »gut,« »schlecht,« and »Böse«⁵⁸ to illustrate the self-activating nature of *noble* valuation and to contrast this with the *herd* method of naming through reaction. Genealogy performs a double task: it posits »origins« in order to untangle the »verknüpft, verhäkelt« antithetical elements that have been homogenized by moral valuation.⁵⁹ Then it uses narrative to rank these elements by virtue of their activity and reactivity, thereby renaming and re-possessing the concept.

This process is identical in both *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*) and *Ecce Homo*. The condition of decadence that Nietzsche saw as pervading the environment of Western civilization, the development of man into »ein krankhaftes Thier« (a sickly animal),⁶⁰ is part of an internal landscape in the *genealogy of self*. *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's *genealogy of self*, is the location where this *decadence* is utilized as a *stimulus for life*. The energy derived from this stimulus produces a self-description that is used as a means of self-overcoming. As Nietzschean self-description is not merely a recapitulation of the qualities of a static ego, the description of the development of the dominance of moral valuation is not the history of a static process. The Nietzschean genealogy of morals is not the description of the »doer,« the »good man,« it is the enactment of the »deed« of a self-description that re-evaluates. Genealogy does not trace the origins of this »good man«; it valorizes the creative self-interpretative act that calls itself good. It follows that any positing of an origin sets the original »deed« in parentheses.

57 NIETZSCHE: 1988c, KSA 3, 422, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Aphorism 58. NAUCK-HOFF and DEL CARO: 2001, 70, for the translation.

58 »Good,« »Bad,« and »Evil«.

59 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 17, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.

60 NIETZSCHE employs this term in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1993, KSA 5, 411.

It is important to recall that Nietzsche conceived of the *will to power* as an interpretative complex and as such it is »nicht ein Sein, nicht ein Werden, sondern ein *Pathos* ist die elementarste Thatsache, aus der sich erst ein Werden, ein Wirken ergibt« (not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos*, is the most elementary fact, and becoming, effecting is only a result of this).⁶¹ The *will to power* is the expansiveness of a perspective as it engages other perspectives. Nietzsche's positing of dual origins (of health and decadence in himself, of the noble and the slave modes of valuation) is a metaphorical representation of the agon of interpretation. This agon is a product of the collision of history (interpretation wearing the mask of necessity) or as Nietzsche would put it, fate, and the contingency of experience (the state of becoming without a *telos*). The site of this collision resides within an interpretative hermeneutic circle that takes the form of a genealogy. An interpretation that makes use of a genealogy analyses these agonistic »origins,« which by definition are seen from a distance. This explains why Nietzsche as a genealogist, utilizes a *Pathos der Distanz* (Pathos of Distance). However, the second moment of valuation from this perspective is repossession through naming. It is through the employment of polemic, a pathos of engagement that the parenthesis of an »originary« moment of active creation is reproduced. A genealogy in a polemical voice is linguistic reclamation. It creates its »truth« through language.⁶²

Wahrheit ist somit nicht etwas, was da wäre und was aufzufinden, zu entdecken wäre, – sondern etwas, das *zu schaffen ist* und das den Namen für einen Prozeß abgibt, mehr noch für einen Willen der Überwältigung, der an sich kein Ende hat: Wahrheit hineinlegen, als ein processus in infinitum, ein *aktives Bestimmen*, nicht ein Bewußtwerden von etwas, das »an sich« fest und bestimmt wäre. Es ist ein Wort für den »Willen zur Macht«.

(Truth is thus not something that's there and must be found out, discovered, but something *that must be made* and that provides the name for a *process*, or rather for a will to overcome, a will that left to itself has no end: inserting truth, as a processus in infinitum, an *active determining*, *not* a becoming conscious

61 NIETZSCHE: 1972, 51, Entry 14 [79]. The English translation: STURGE: 2003, 247.

62 Most commentators marginalize the importance of polemics in the Nietzschean genealogy. For example Daniel W. Conway remarks »Nietzsche advertises the *Genealogy* as a *polemic* [eine Streitschrift]; it contains both a genealogical interpretation and elements of a symptomatological critique. Many of the book's confusions are attributable to Nietzsche's failure (or unwillingness) to distinguish clearly between his genealogy of Morals and the critical method it enables.« (CONWAY: 1994, 329).

of something, that is »in itself« fixed and determinate. It is a word for the »will to power«.)⁶³

For Nietzsche, »truth« was the name given to a perpetual process of overcoming. It was a linguistic representation of great fluidity. If we associate genealogy as a description of the past with the notion of history or autobiography, this presents us with a paradox. It is as if Nietzsche were saying, if an origin is posited, it is a creation of a »truth,« a willful overcoming. Since the will cannot will backwards in time, the »truth« claim of a Nietzschean genealogy can only reside in the present or the future.

Historia abscondita. – Jeder grosse Mensch hat eine rückwirkende Kraft: alle Geschichte wird um seinen Willen wieder auf die Waage gestellt, und tausend Geheimnisse der Vergangenheit kriechen aus ihren Schlupfwinkeln – hinein in seine Sonne. Es ist gar nicht abzusehen, was Alles einmal noch Geschichte sein wird. Die Vergangenheit ist vielleicht immer noch wesentlich unentdeckt! Es bedarf noch so vieler rückwirkender Kräfte!

(*Historia abscondita.* – Every great human being exerts a retroactive force: for his sake all of history is put on the scale again, and a thousand secrets of the past crawl out of their hiding places – into his sunshine. There is no telling what may yet become a part of history. Maybe the past is still essentially undiscovered! So many retroactive forces are still needed!)⁶⁴

That is to say, »truth« manifests in the present as a re-valuation and in the future as a dominant perspective.⁶⁵ Nietzsche's genealogical method is in this sense an explication of the Aphorism 22 in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*). He bares the device of his interpretative process and if the objection is raised that his genealogy is only an interpretation – »nun, – um so besser« (well, so much the better).

This phrase brings us to the subject of the role that polemic plays in the Nietzschean genealogy. It is my contention that there is a double movement in the Nietzschean genealogy. Genealogical description encloses »origins« parenthetically; polemic opens up the parentheses and thereby initiates the performative aspect of the genealogical process of affirmation. As »truth« is a perpetual process, this affirmation is subject to constant repetition. This double movement manifests Nietzsche's

63 NIETZSCHE: 1970, 49, Entry 9 [91]. The English translation: STURGE: 2003, 155.

64 NIETZSCHE: 1988c, KSA 3, 404, *Aphorism* 34. The English translation is from NAUCKHOFF and DEL CARO: 2001, 53–54.

65 As described in the first chapter of this book, Brandes' notion of a vital realism and Strindberg's description of his »greater naturalism« bear family resemblances to Nietzsche's views on truth and naming.

Wiederkunftsgedanke (thought of the eternal return). It is a form of differentiated repetition as a species of the *Pathos of Distance*. First genealogy creates a hierarchy between contradictory historical forces and their internalization. Then the act of describing this process of ranking in a polemical voice engages with these forces and makes them proximate through the process of re-naming. This process creates affect both within and without. The very same contradictory forces appear in both *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and *Ecce Homo*. In either case, the »doer« is a fiction and the »deed,« (the struggle between contradictory forces in the absence of a witness to the subsequent suffering engendered by this conflict) is recreated through the employment of a polemical voice. Nietzsche's genealogical method affirms the past by making it an affect of a momentary act of the will. Polemic is the means by which the historical or autobiographical past is addressed contemporaneously. The paradoxical claim that the truth of the past resides in the present colors the Nietzschean genealogy and points to its performative imperative.

Polemic

Im Grunde lag mir gerade damals etwas viel Wichtigeres am Herzen als eignes oder fremdes Hypothesenwesen über den Ursprung der Moral (oder, genauer: letzteres allein um eines Zweckes willen, zu dem es eins unter vielen Mitteln ist). Es handelte sich für mich um den Werth der Moral, – und darüber hatte ich mich fast allein mit meinem grossen Lehrer Schopenhauer auseinanderzusetzen, an den wie an einem Gegenwärtigen jenes Buch, die Leidenschaft und der geheime Widerspruch jenes Buchs sich wendet (– denn auch jenes Buch war eine »Streitschrift«).

(Even then my real concern was something much more important than hypothesis-mongering, whether my own or other people's, on the origin of morality (or more precisely: the latter concerned me solely for the sake of a goal to which it was only one means among many). What was at stake was the *value* of morality – and over this I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book of mine, the passion and the concealed contradiction of that book, addressed itself as if to a contemporary (– for that book, too, was a »polemic«).⁶⁶

In this citation from the »Vorrede« of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*), Nietzsche is quite clear about both the manner in which the question of morality will be addressed and the impor-

66 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 251–252, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, »Vorrede«. The English translation is found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 19.

tance of an understanding of his own past. In the previous section of the »Vorrede,« Nietzsche referred to several of his earlier statements about the question of morality. He states that one should compare what he had previously said about the subject in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (*Human, All Too Human*), and *Morgenröte* (*Daybreak*). In the citation above, the latter text was said to be addressed to his teacher, Schopenhauer,⁶⁷ as if he were a contemporary (Gegenwärtiger), for that book too was a polemic (Streitschrift). In other words, polemic is an interpretive pathos of engagement, it makes the past proximate. If Nietzsche's goal is not »Hypothesenwesen« and the goal of depicting the origin of moral thinking was only one means among many, then the aim of the genealogy is not the depiction of a stable historical »truth«. Polemic addresses the past as present and polemical genealogy as a »truth« creating activity struggles against other interpretations that claim to depict history based on a reconstruction of the past by making the past proximate and subject to reinterpretation.

A *Streitschrift* is an argument or a struggle in writing. This leads us to a question. What does Nietzsche's *Streitschrift* struggle against? In his later work, Nietzsche struggles against the *highest values*, the *ascetic ideal*. »Es gilt, das ungeheure, ferne und so versteckte Land der Moral – der wirklich dagewesenen, wirklich gelebten Moral – mit lauter neuen Frage und gleichsam neuen Augen zu bereisen.« (The project is to traverse with quite novel questions, and as though with new eyes, the enormous, distant and so well hidden land of morality – of morality that has actually existed, actually been lived.)⁶⁸ The rediscovery of this distant land implies a journey to the past by means of genealogical investigation. Nietzsche's project seeks out the ossified elements that lie behind moral valuation, »der uns heute nur deshalb aus den Augen gerückt ist, weil er – siegreich gewesen ist« (which we no longer see because it – has been

67 The choice of engaging Schopenhauer is interesting on several fronts: first, by engaging with his »teacher,« Nietzsche enables the creation of a distinct perspective, and second, as Andreas Ur SOMMER points out, Nietzsche mentions »nihilists« for the first time in the summer of 1880 and calls Schopenhauer »their philosopher«. Sommer's reference is found in *Nihilism and Skepticism in Nietzsche*, an article in ANSELL-PEARSON: 2006. The reference to Schopenhauer can be found on pg. 252. Nietzsche's original formulation can be found in KSA 9, 4 [103].

68 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 254 The English translation can be found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 21.

victorious.)⁶⁹ According to Nietzsche, these elements have crystallized through time into dogma and wear the mask of the eternal and the unchanging. This leads us to our next, perhaps more properly Nietzschean question: how does Nietzsche's *Streitschrift* struggle against the ascetic ideal? His answer: »Damit ein Heiligthum aufgerichtet werden kann, muss ein Heiligthum zerbrochen werden.« (If a temple is to be erected a temple must be destroyed.)⁷⁰

If the stated goal of the genealogy of morals is to determine the *Werthe* (value) of morality by tracing their »origins,« and if this process untangles the hidden origins of the ascetic mode of valuation in order to expose it as a reactive inversion of a noble and active perspective while making the contradictory claim that origins are no indication of moral valuation in the present, then the posited original activity of valuation must be put in parentheses. Genealogy turns its face towards the past. Polemic is the means by which genealogy engages the past in the present. Polemic opens the parentheses, which enclose origins. This enables the *warlike* and creative powers of interpretation to engage with the dominant, *siegreich* ascetic/moral interpretations of rival genealogies. The use of a polemical voice makes »history« a creative force that engages contemporary modes of valuation.

Polemic is a means of overcoming. It transforms description into de-scription and then it re-inscribes. It unwrites by writing, and then it can re-write. It destroys in order to create. If genealogy as a discrete element can be regarded as a re-creation of *das Pathos der Distanz* (the Pathos of Distance), a genealogy that relies on polemic to engage the past in the present moment can be seen as creating a simultaneous pathos of engagement. Nietzschean perspectival interpretation oscillates between a pathos of distance and a pathos of engagement. In Nietzsche's philosophy, this oscillation has its parallel in the way the eternal return is able to affirm the past in the moment despite the inability of the will to will backwards. In Nietzschean genealogy, history returns in a polemical present. The parentheses that enclose the past are exploded by the power of a discourse that claims the noble right to possess by naming for itself.

69 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 268. The English translation comes from KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 34.

70 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 335. The English is found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 95.

Nietzschean genealogy performed as a polemic is not history nor is it autobiography; it is dynamite.

The Nietzschean genealogy as dynamite, however, does not merely destroy; it creates. A consideration of his genealogical method in isolation tells us *what* Nietzsche intended to destroy. But the *what* tells us nothing about *how* Nietzsche claims that he can create by destroying. An understanding of *how* will enable us to understand *why* Nietzsche posits that creation necessitates destruction.

The truth claim of the Nietzschean genealogy is that »truth« is a perpetual creative process, which by virtue of its perspectival quality creates the position of the subject within colliding and antagonistic forces. Interpretations born of different perspectives struggle against one another both within and without the body; positing values as any linguistic creation is governed by a selection process, a naming, that appropriates. A genealogical text written in the polemical voice performs this struggle. It is an interpretation and as such engages other perspectives.

The key to this performance is narrative. However, before illustrating how the Nietzschean genealogy performs a narration in which form supercedes content, I will address a possible objection to my interpretation. Nietzsche's claim that destruction implies creation is not merely a metaphysical claim based on the myth of Dionysus. Rather, the myth of Dionysus serves as a metaphor for his philosophical praxis. Dionysian dismemberment, the destruction of a body, always anticipates a return in a new form. *Der Wille zur Macht* (the will to power), as an interpretative pathos, obliterates (creates oblivion) by willfully forgetting in order to make a new interpretation manifest. As Nietzschean genealogy oscillates between a pathos of distance and a pathos of engagement, it recreates the past in order to affirm it through an act of the will in the moment. This movement between the two types of pathos performs an act of creation that enables an affirmation of the eternal return through a selection process that willfully relegates and omits aspects of the past. *Der Wille zur Macht* is the name for an interpretative complex. There is no claim for the primacy of a stable text or for a truth that resides outside of interpretation. In a creative act, it imposes form on raw material. This process of creation uses experience and re-forms it in the present. Creation thus implies an active engagement between a creator and his understanding of the past. The past is manifested in the present as an activity through which willful and selective memory affirms only certain aspects of the

past in order to give form to experience in a momentary act. This selective process is not relative, but relational; it ranks. As perspectival interpretation is derived from the position of a body, and the body is likened to a social structure, interpretation is dependent upon a hierarchy. The interpretation that abets an act of creation is a willful valuation of the past in the moment. As the body as social structure forgets through interpretation, the creative process is in-corporated within the body as a condition of creation. Interpretation requires an affirmative forgetting, it destroys in order to create. This is a description of a process, not a metaphysical claim.

Genealogy and Polemic

Man ist um den Preis Künstler, daß man das, was alle Nichtkünstler »Form« nennen, als *Inhalt*, als »die Sache selbst« empfindet. Damit gehört man freilich in eine *verkehrte* Welt: denn nunmehr wird einem der Inhalt zu etwas bloß Formalem – unser Leben eingerechnet.

(The price of being an artist is that one feels what all non-artists call ›form‹ to be *content*, to be ›the matter itself‹. Certainly, this places one in a world *turned upside down*: for now content becomes something merely formal – including our life.)⁷¹

Nietzsche's genealogies give form to suffering. *Der Wille zur Macht* is a pathos, that is to say, an occurrence of suffering or a rhetorical mode that addresses individuals and their emotions. *Der Wille zur Macht* as an interpretive force experiences the occasion of suffering as individual address, as a process of individuation. As discussed earlier, Nietzsche posits that the creation of consciousness came as the result of the wars of pre-history that created the first proto-societies. In Nietzsche's genealogies, profound suffering separates within the individual as well as without. The individual is a site of competing emotions that are ranked according to the *organizing idea*. As Nietzsche stated that the individual body is like a society and claims that societies are created by the victorious who extend their dominion by establishing a hierarchy, this *organizing idea* represents a species of self-conquest or *Selbstüberwindung*. *Selbstüberwindung* is affirmed by self-description, a selection process that needs to impose a form upon memory in the present. For Nietzsche, a polemic, a war of words, is a willful, creative »deed« that must obliterate in order to

⁷¹ NIETZSCHE: 1970, 251, Entry II[3]. The English translation is from STURGE: 2003, 207.

impose form. As he believed that creation is interpretation, the individual interprets and seeks to extend his will through struggle with other interpretations for »ein Philosoph, der kriegerisch ist, fordert auch Probleme zum Zweikampf heraus« (a warlike philosopher will challenge problems to single combat).⁷² Internal warfare is the means by which Nietzsche creates what he said that he had lacked in his previous aphoristic efforts to criticize moral thinking, »eine eigne Sprache für diese eignen Dinge« (my own language for my own things).⁷³

The answer to the question of *how* the Nietzschean polemic struggles against the *ascetic ideal* is that it creates by destroying. This led us to the question of how Nietzsche performs this creative destruction. The answer to this question has been far too abstract up to this point. The postulation that Nietzschean genealogy is predicated upon an act of creation that obliterates elements of the past in order to value and appropriate in the present suffices as a starting point for further analysis. However, the Nietzschean genealogy must be shown to perform in a different way than a genealogy that is beholden to the ideal of an absolute truth and an absolute origin. The specific case needs to fit the abstract model. The claim that answering *how* Nietzsche creates by destroying tells us the *why* of polemical genealogy suggests that form predominates over content. It also gives us insight into why Nietzsche valorizes artistic creation and forwards an aesthetic answer to an ethical question.

The preceding discussion attempted to point out similarities between the process of artistic creation and the Nietzschean concept of self-overcoming that he believed was an intrinsic element of creating an interpretative perspective. These similarities suggest that Nietzschean genealogy has a similar performative imperative. It is important to remember that Nietzsche did not believe that form was identical to content. He rejects the concept of identity in principle. Rather, the relationship between the two is an interpretative complex in which content is performed and form is content laden.

The form of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*) is a genealogy written in a polemical voice. The content tells the story

72 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, (*Ecce Homo*, »Warum ich so weise bin«). The English translation is found in NORMAN: 2005, 82.

73 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 251, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, »Vorrede«. The English translation is found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 18.

of the victory of *reactive forces* and the ascension of the *ascetic ideal* to the position of being the *highest value*. However, this narrative, being a genealogy, posits an origin for the valuation that structured society before this triumph of *reactive forces*. According to Nietzsche, society was created by a war of conquest waged by »ein Rudel blonder Raubthiere« (a pack of blond beasts of prey).⁷⁴ These conquerors organized the proto-state as a work of »instinktives Formen-schaffen, Formen-aufdrücken« (instinctive creation and imposition of forms).⁷⁵ They instituted a hierarchy through a reign of terror and domination, taking away the freedom of the masses by enclosing them within the walls of this newly created state. These subservient masses were then formed into a herd and their instinctive aggression was turned inward. This original act of *creation* had its price and the conquerors unwittingly created the conditions for their own downfall. »Sie sind es nicht, bei denen das ›schlechte Gewissen‹ gewachsen ist, das versteht sich von vornherein, – aber es würde nicht ohne sie gewachsen sein.« (It is not in them that the ›bad conscience‹ developed, that goes without saying – but it would not have developed *without* them.)⁷⁶ The internalization of the tyranny of these blond beasts, this *schlechtes Gewissen* (bad conscience), became the raw material with which the *priests* created the *ascetic ideal* and led the *slave* revolt that inverted the »originary« system of valuation. This complicity of the *Herrn* in their own downfall is not posited as being the result of a teleology. It is the outcome of a struggle and Nietzsche, by no means, believed it to be an end result, for »welche Vorzeit übrigens zu allen Zeiten da ist oder wieder möglich ist« (this prehistory is in any case present in all ages or may also reappear).⁷⁷ The original act of creation is again put in parentheses and is said to lie dormant, available for reactivation.

The stated goal of Nietzsche's genealogy of morals is to reveal the immoral origins of conventional moral valuation. He does this by positing the origins of valuation itself as an attribute of a group of warlike creators who took away with »ihrer Hammerschläge, ihrer Künstler-Gewaltsam-

74 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 324.

75 Ibid., 325. Notice the double usage of Form. The English translation is found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 86.

76 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 325. English translation KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 86.

77 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 307. The parentheses are Nietzsche's. The English translation is in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 71.

keit ein ungeheures Quantum Freiheit aus der Welt, mindestens aus der Sichtbarkeit geschafft und gleichsam latent gemacht worden wäre« (their hammer blows, their artist's violence made a terrible quanta of freedom [disappear] from the world, or at least [they] drove it out of sight and made it latent).⁷⁸ There are two points of note here. First, the freedom that was taken out of the world did not disappear; it was latent. Second, the hammer blows of the conquerors were destructive in the way that a sculptor's hammer destroys an unformed block in order to create.

The form of the Nietzschean genealogy, the process that it performs is an attempt to activate this latent *freedom*, to invert the repression that he characterizes as the prominent feature of the *ascetic ideal*. Nietzsche was by no means nostalgic for the *blond beast*. The truth claim of the genealogical narrative is weak and the depiction of the originary act of formation is metaphorical, a stand-in for a performative act of valuation. As Nietzsche understood valuation as a struggle between competing perspectives, the metaphor he employs is war.

In the narrative of the origination of moral valuation, the destruction of the prehistorical wars of conquest imposed form upon the conquered and created a society. This original act of creation was unconscious, without meaning. Meaning was created by the *priest* whose creative act was saying *no* to life and providing his herd with a witness for their suffering. It follows that Nietzsche claimed that the only meaning that humankind has known is reactive, nihilistic. In the third and last essay of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* entitled »Was bedeuten asketische Ideale?« (What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?), Nietzsche polemicizes against the dominance of the *ascetic ideal* in all forms of endeavor. He condemned ascetic thinking as a form of thought that was created by the phenomenon that he described as follows: »lieber will noch der Mensch das Nichts wollen, als nicht wollen« (man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will).⁷⁹ For Nietzsche, even the atheists and scientists are guilty for despite their denial of *God*, they leave open the place where he once resided. In other words, their belief in absolute truth is a belief in nothingness. This is the peculiarity of Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism.

⁷⁸ NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 325. The English translation is mine.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 412. The English translation found in KAUFMANN and HOLLINGDALE: 1967, 163.

The content of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* consists of the positing of an originary mode of active creation through war, the revolt against the societal structure that was created through these struggles, and a critique of the lingering and *decaying* effect of the *ascetic* values that emerged triumphant. The relationship of this content to the form of a polemical genealogy with a weak truth claim reveals the *why* of the philosophical project of the mature Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's genealogical method does not claim priority for the original, nor does it posit a telos. Competing perspectives are immanent in the interpreter and in constant struggle. Therefore the tone of the genealogy is not nostalgic for a way of life that has disappeared. Though polemic is a war with words that reclaims the noble *right to name*, it is not a mimetic return of the repressed elements of affirmative creation. As argued earlier, the genealogy posits an »origin« which is placed in parentheses. Genealogy by virtue of having its gaze directed towards the past performs its task under the aegis of a pathos of distance. Polemic, on the other hand, is a participant in a struggle and assumes a pathos of engagement. The Nietzschean genealogical polemic imposes a form upon the raw material of its inquiry by oscillating between these two types of pathos. It selects and ranks elements of the past and opens up the parentheses around »origins« to reclaim linguistic hegemony. Genealogy selects historical elements and exposes the »origin« of moral valuation to be an alloy of *immoral* elements. Polemic effaces the distance between an »origin« and the moment of writing by engaging with *what Nietzsche* calls *reactive* elements and releases the energy of the *original* warlike act of creative destruction. As Nietzsche understood naming to be a form of domination, polemic as a war of words attempts to create the »truth« of the past in the present tense through a struggle with other interpretations. The oscillating form of the polemical genealogy brackets the original »doer« and reaffirms the »deed,« thereby eliminating the place that he claims that previous genealogies of morals which privilege the »good« subject. In this way, Nietzsche's genealogies are aesthetic and not ethical, being about the act of creation and not *right* behavior. Polemic also obliterates the place held by an absolute creating agent and denies a teleology for it actively creates its own »truth« through the pathos of engagement and does not view the »historical« as a process that creates according to a divine or rational plan. We will return to the implications

of Nietzsche's understanding of the primacy of aesthetic concerns later in the chapter.

The Nietzschean truth claim was not based on arguing for a historical primacy or inevitability, its »truth« is created through performance. For Nietzsche, form is the *matter itself*. However, it is not identical to content. An internal hierarchy or form dictates the process that creates »truth« through the *Selbstüberwindung* that emerges from linguistic reclamation. Expressed through the use of a polemic, genealogy is the present tense selection process that imposes form upon a world »nicht, weil Gesetze in ihr herrschen, sondern weil absolut die Gesetze *fehlen*, und jede Macht in jedem Augenblicke ihre letzte Konsequenz zieht« (not because laws prevail in it but because laws are absolutely *lacking* and every power draws its ultimate consequences every moment).⁸⁰ The form of Nietzschean genealogies is, in a sense, an explication of Aphorism 22 of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*). They perform the dramatization of a philosophical praxis based on the interaction of competing perspectives both within and without the body, thereby creating a self-understanding that is *merely formal* through an interpretation that is trans-formal.

Allmählich hat sich mir herausgestellt, was jede grosse Philosophie bisher war: nämlich das Selbstbekenntnis ihres Urhebers und seine Art ungewollter und unvermerkter mémoires; insgleichen, dass die moralischen (oder unmoralischen) Absichten in jeder Philosophie den eigentlichen Lebenskeim ausmachen, aus dem jedesmal die ganze Pflanze gewachsen ist.

(It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir, moreover, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy have every time constituted the real germ of life out of which the entire plant has grown).⁸¹

Nietzsche's claim that philosophy is a species of memoir informs us how his genealogy of morals interacts with his *genealogy of self*. It is important to remember that his genealogy of morals is the story of the internalization of active creative forces and the creation of the *unhealthy* condition of *ressentiment*. It is also essential to recall that Nietzsche

80 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KSA 5, 37 (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*). The English translation found in HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 53.

81 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KS 5, 19–20. The English translation is from HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 37.

regards any postulation to be an interpretation, a location of struggle. With these two points in mind, let us return to Aphorism 6 cited above to understand better the *genealogy of self*. It concludes:

Umgekehrt ist an dem Philosophie ganz und gar nichts Unpersönliches; und insbesondere giebt seine Moral ein entschiedenes und entscheidendes Zeugniß dafür ab, wer er ist – das heisst, in welcher Rangordnung die innersten Triebe seiner Natur zu einander gestellt sind.

(In the philosopher, on the contrary, there is nothing whatever impersonal; and above all, his morality bears decided and decisive testimony to who he is – that is to say, to the order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relative to each other.)⁸²

The title page of *Zur Genealogie der Moral (On the Genealogy of Morals)* had the following inscription: »Dem letztveröffentlichten *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* zur Ergänzung und Verdeutlichung begeben.« (To expand upon and clarify the last publication, *Beyond Good and Evil*.) It follows that this genealogy with its ordering of what Nietzsche saw as the two opposing interpretative perspectives in his historical environment was also considered by him to be the result of an internal struggle, a »Rangordnung die innersten Triebe« (a ranking of the innermost drives) and as such, a disguised memoir. This explains why Nietzsche was to open his *genealogy of self*, *Ecce Homo*, with the following words:

In Voraussicht, dass ich über Kurzem mit der schwersten Forderung an die Menschheit herantreten muss, die je an sie gestellt werde, scheint es mir unerlässlich zu sagen, *wer ich bin*.

(In the expectation that soon I will have to confront humanity with the most difficult demand it has ever faced, it seemed imperative for me to say *who I am*.)⁸³

Since »truth« is created and creation is an interpretative event, and to say who one is entails a performance of a »deed« in the present rather than the excavation of the attributes of a stable past, *the genealogy of self is a hermeneutic process*. This hermeneutic process bares the device of the construction of its own horizons through a struggle that is intimately related to what Nietzsche saw to be his own historical moment. The *genealogy of self* is a conflation of »historical« and experiential conditions

82 NIETZSCHE: 1993, KS 5, 20. The English translation is found in HOLLINGDALE: 1990, 38.

83 NIETZSCHE: 1988d, KSA 6, 257 (*Ecce Homo*, »Vorrede«). The English translation is found in NORMAN: 2005, 71.

in a dynamic relationship, the baring of the device of a self-overcoming dependent on an internalization of contradictory perspectives.

Seen in this light, genealogy and polemic – the formal elements of the oscillation between pathos of proximity and distance – seek to dominate other perspectives in an interpretative moment. Nietzsche's genealogies of morals and of self are both sites of simultaneously internal and external collision. For Nietzsche, neither the world nor the self were texts, both are sites of competing interpretations that need to be mastered and ranked in order to impose form on a world of becoming rather than being. To impose this form, he confronts moral valuation with immorality, genealogy with counter-genealogy, and the dogmatic assertions of absolute truth with an affirmation of a lawless and agonistic world. For Nietzsche, both the slave and the noble perspectives existed internally as well as externally. Nietzsche's genealogy of morals is not history nor is his *genealogy of self* an autobiography: both works oscillate between these two poles.

Strindberg recognized that there was a process that was described in Nietzsche's work, and in 1889 he saw this process as an explanation of his own authorial project. It is to his work that we now turn. I will return to the themes addressed in the discussion above and elaborate upon them, analyzing a selection of Strindberg's texts in light of his claims that he had anticipated Nietzsche and that his first »autobiography,« *Tjänstekvinnans son* (*Son of a Servant*), was a war of liberation.

Several claims need greater elaboration. The most prominent of these assertions is that there is a commonality in Nietzsche and Strindberg's authorships. In order to show that this commonality is not a matter of influence, Strindberg's claim that the *Nietzschean* aspects of his authorship predate his encounter with the philosopher will be explored. This exploration will yield concrete examples that answer to the inappropriateness of an influence model of analyzing the encounter. Second, an elaboration of the surface phenomenon of the use of Strindberg and Nietzsche as tropes in the anti-realist discourse will clarify the compatibility of Strindberg's conception of his »naturalism« with Nietzsche's philosophy. Third, this compatibility will be elaborated upon further to reveal a commonality on the level of form. This form is the *genealogy of self*.

The *genealogy of self* will be further explicated in terms of its components: the relationship between naming and forgetting, the internalization

of a weakened truth claim, the self-referential hermeneutic, and the conflation of autobiography and history on the level of subject formation within the text. This process of subject formation will reveal that both Strindberg and Nietzsche are faced with the dilemma of identification without a stable origin. Their solutions to this problem will conclude our exploration, as *Ecce Homo* will be compared to Strindberg's *Inferno*.

My definition of the *genealogy of self* is dependent on the following formal components: the positing of dual origins in the external world, the treatment of this world as a text to be interpreted, the subsequent ranking of these elements, the highlighting of the presence of these origins in the interpreter who then declares his ranking to be a self-overcoming, the positing of a self-created »truth« in opposition to a self that is created by an absolute agent, and the substitution of this constructed »self« in the position once occupied by the notion of an absolute, creating agent of »truth«. The remainder of this chapter will trace the development of this process in selected texts taken from Strindberg's production between 1882 and 1898.

The fourth chapter ended with a discussion of Strindberg's first and only public statement on his encounter with Nietzsche, *Mitt förhållande til Nietzsche* (1894). In this essay, Strindberg presented a model for his own understanding of his production, where his first »autobiographical« work, *Tjänstekvinnans son*, acted as a turning point in his authorship. He called this turning point a »befrielsekriget« (war of liberation). He then mentioned a number of his own texts as proof of his anticipation of the philosopher. These texts were divided into works that were anticipatory of his encounter with Nietzsche and those which were supported by Nietzschean texts after the encounter: the first group included three short stories published in 1887 and the second group was comprised of the preface to *Fröken Julie* (*Miss Julie*) and the novella *Tschandala*, both written in 1889. These short stories were all later connected in what Strindberg called his *Vivesektioner* and were all concerned with the psychological effects and power struggles waged both internally and out in the world. The preface to *Fröken Julie* is famous for the notion of the characterless character.⁸⁴ *Tschandala* is a rather flawed novella whose

84 STRINDBERG: 1984a, 104–105, *Fröken Julie*, »Förord«. Strindberg's argument for the employment of »characterless« characters unfolds as follows: the term character had been employed originally as a designation for the dominating aspect of a »själskomplex« (soul complex), then the middle class appropriated the term in order to fix roles and

protagonist is a Swedish noble in a conflict with a treacherous Gypsy. This novella is a vulgar masking of Strindberg's own conflict with a Danish Gypsy, and his experience is painted through the perspective of Nietzsche's discussion of the *Book of Manu* in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.

Mitt Förhållande till Nietzsche concluded with a challenge from Strindberg to his readers to review his production prior to the encounter with the philosopher and to see if he had not anticipated the aspect of his work that had been designated as »Nietzschean«. It is my contention that there are *Nietzschean* elements in Strindberg's production before 1888. However, the question of whether Strindberg anticipated his own *Nietzscheanism* is of little importance here, as this is a question of influence. My intention is to explicate a dynamic that is common to both authorships and my exploration of Strindberg's production is designed to illustrate the relationship of these dynamics to subject construction in the initial stages of Strindberg's autobiographical project. It is also my task to name this »Nietzschean« element and show it to be a commonality that precedes the encounter between the two men and continues long after Strindberg's »Nietzschean« period had ended. I will now turn to the texts. The first point of analysis will be the development of description in Strindberg's authorship and the relationship of this to valuation. This will inform us about the compatibility of his naturalism and his »Nietzscheanism«.

arrest the mutability caused by development. As a result, playwrights have adapted this fixed conception of the human being on stage. He then, on pg. 105 offers his own alternative for the depiction of »modern« human beings on stage: »Mina själar (karakterer) äro konglomerater av förgångna kulturgrader och pågående bitar ur böcker och tidningar, stycken av människor, avrivna lappar av helgdagskläder, som blivit lumpor, alldeles som själen är hopflikad.« JOHNSON: 1976, 77, provides the following translation: »My souls (characters) are conglomerations of past and present cultures, bits out of books and of newspapers, pieces of human beings, torn-off shreds of holiday clothes that have become rags, exactly as the human soul is put together.«